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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon voted today for two bills to support science and math education and research and spur U.S. competitiveness in the global economy as part of the House of Representatives' "Innovation Agenda."

The *"10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds" Science and Math Scholarship Act* (H.R. 362) will increase the number of highly qualified math and science teachers in K-12. The *Sowing the Seeds Through Science and Engineering Act* (H.R. 363) will support young researchers to foster the most innovative scientific research. Rep. Melancon also supported both bills as a member of the House Committee on Science and Technology, where they were drafted.

**"Innovation and education are the driving forces behind a strong economy,"** said Rep. Melancon.
**"We must take bold steps now to ensure that American students and workers are prepared for the careers of the future and that our nation is equipped to compete in the global economy. These bills will encourage more young people to become math and science teachers and will foster cutting edge research by young scientists. I am proud to support them and will continue working in Congress to make sure the United States remains the world leader in research and innovation."**

The "10,000 Teachers" bill, which overwhelmingly passed the House with bipartisan support, will take critical steps to place highly qualified teachers in math, science, and technology K-12 classrooms. The bill will invest in 10,000 new science and math teachers, totaling some 25,000 over five years, by increasing the number of scholarships for students majoring in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields and who are committed to pursuing teaching. The bill will encourage these scholarship recipients to choose careers in high-need school systems by creating a clearinghouse of information on teaching opportunities available in these schools.

The "10,000 Teachers" bill will also strengthen the skills of math, science and technology of up to 250,000 teachers by improving education and training opportunities for math and science teachers and expanding professional development, summer training institutes, and graduate education assistance.

According to the National Academies, the number one thing we can do for our future economic health is invest in our science and math teachers. A number of highly publicized studies have shown that the mathematics and science achievement of American students is poor by international standards. In 2005, 39 percent of 12th graders lacked even basic high school math skills. [National Assessment of Educational Progress]

This measure has been endorsed by a broad range of businesses and universities as well as industry and education groups, including the Business Roundtable, Association of American Universities, Council on Competitiveness, the College Board, Semiconductor Industry Association and the Business Software Alliance.

Rep. Melancon also voted for the *Sowing the Seeds Through Science and Engineering Research Act* (H.R. 363), which also passed the House with broad bipartisan support. The "Sowing the Seeds" bill would increase support for long-term scientific research and encourage young scientists and researchers to pursue high-risk/high-reward research. The bill provides grants for outstanding researchers in the early stages of their careers from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy.

The bill also establishes a Presidential Innovation Award to stimulate scientific and engineering advances, provides graduate research assistantships in areas of national need, and establishes a national coordination office to identify and prioritize research infrastructure needs at universities and national laboratories.

Researchers at early stages in their careers are more likely to shift paradigms, break with tradition, or bring new ideas in high-risk/high-reward research that is likely to be transformative or highly innovative.

Like the "10,000 Teachers" bill, the "Sowing the Seeds" bill is based on the recommendations

of the National Academies' widely-acknowledged "Rising Above the Gathering Storm" report, which found that the U.S. stands to lose its competitive edge in the international economy unless immediate action is taken.

**"We must invest in the minds of our young researchers because they hold the fresh, new ideas that innovation depends upon,"** said Rep. Melancon. **"Someday these young researchers will fill the ranks of our senior, established and ground-breaking scientists and our country's economy and competitive stature will depend on them."**

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